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WHA Press Guidance
December 3, 2001

VENEZUELA: GENERAL STRIKE

Question: Do you have any comment on the December 10 general strike in Venezuela?

A: WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE VENEZUELAN FEDERATION OF CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE HAS CALLED FOR A GENERAL STRIKE ON DECEMBER 10 TO PROTEST THE RECENT ENACTMENT BY PRESIDENT CHAVEZ OF SEVERAL LAWS, AND THAT THE VENEZUELAN CONFEDERATION OF WORKERS HAS SAID IT WILL SUPPORT THE STRIKE.

THE GENERAL STRIKE IS AN INTERNAL DOMESTIC MATTER, AND IT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE U.S. TO COMMENT AT THIS TIME.

WE ARE ISSUING A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT FOR VENEZUELA TO INFORM U.S. CITIZENS IN VENEZUELA AS WELL AS THOSE WHO MAY BE CONSIDERING TRAVEL TO VENEZUELA IN THE COMING WEEKS ABOUT THE SITUATION.

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Question: As the December 10 general strike approaches, are you concerned that Venezuela is becoming unstable or is teetering?

**A: IT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE TO CHARACTERIZE THE
EVOLVING POLITICAL SITUATION IN VENEZUELA -- OR
ANYWHERE ELSE -- BASED ON POSSIBLE FUTURE EVENTS.
THE PROPOSED GENERAL STRIKE IS PART OF A LARGER
DEMOCRATIC DIALOGUE. THE U.S. WILL CONTINUE TO
OBSERVE CLOSELY DEVELOPMENTS IN VENEZUELA.**